

BUREAU OF EXTRA-SOLAR INTELLIGENCE



TO: All Spacecraft Owners and Operators
FROM: Bureau of Extra-Solar Intelligence
SUBJECT: Encounters with Aliens
DATE: February 8, 2132

As of this writing, no registered spacecrafts have documented any encounters with alien life forms. Although sightings of unidentified objects have been reported, none have proved reliable.

Nevertheless, this Bureau believes that alien life forms do exist and will enter our solar system within the next millennium. This belief is based in part on the fact that repetitious signals have been received at the Arecibo and Pulkovo observatory dishes since the late twentieth century. The source of these signals—seven dashes followed by either three or 11 dashes—has not been established, but clearly a highly advanced civilization is sending them.

Should you or any of your crew members have an encounter with any alien life form, notify your local space safety patrol as soon as possible. Extensive research suggests that there is a 99 percent chance that an alien will have only peaceful intentions. Do not—repeat, DO NOT—hurt or kill any alien unless it is a life-or-death situation for you or a member of your crew.

We have surmised that any alien will be equipped with sensory organs, physical manipulators, a method of locomotion, and a method for gathering energy and eliminating waste heat and (most likely) chemicals. Note that alien life forms are likely to have evolved under extremely different conditions than have existed on Earth. They may not be able to perceive the same physical and electromagnetic frequencies as humans. They may not consist of a carbon-based chemistry, and their metabolisms may not be chemical in nature. The atmosphere of your ship may be poisonous to them, and vice versa.

It is possible that an alien race will be similar to ours in appearance. However, do not let appearances fool you; gestures and facial expressions are cultural in origin and are likely to mean different things. A smile, for instance, may be interpreted as a baring of teeth, forewarning attack. If you do encounter an alien, please remain calm and be very careful. Remember: the first alien encounter will be an historic event far surpassing Columbus's discovery of America. The responsibility of being ambassador for all Earth is very great, but the rewards for success will be greater.